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# **Amador County System Improvement Plan 2011-2014**



## **UPDATE: March 17, 2012**

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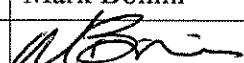
**California's Child and Family Services Review  
System Improvement Plan**

<b>County:</b>	Amador
<b>Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:</b>	Amador County Department of Social Services
<b>Period of Plan:</b>	March 18, 2011 – June 30, 2014
<b>Period of Outcomes Data:</b>	Q 3 2011
<b>Date Submitted:</b>	

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**Submitted by each agency for the children under its care**

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<b>Signature:</b>	

This is the first update of Amador County's current System Improvement Plan (SIP) for child welfare services. The current plan was approved by the Amador County Board of Supervisors on March 8, 2011 and covers the time period of March 18, 2011 through June 30, 2014. This SIP update is part of the California Outcomes and Accountability Review. The update is developed by the county lead agencies, Child Protective Services (CPS) and Juvenile Probation, and is intended to be a mechanism that provides stakeholders and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) with information about the status of the county's activities. The update is due one year from the due date of the three year SIP Report. A verbal update will be due to the state in one year.

A brief summary of system factors and changes affecting progress include:

- The current economic climate has had a significant impact on child welfare services in Amador County. Over the past few years, staff reductions have occurred in both Social Services and Probation. Amador County employees remain furloughed, with the work week reducing from 40 hours to 36 hours. As a result, the offices are closed every Friday. Reductions in staff and staff hours stretch the remaining staff, making improvements in compliance difficult to sustain and limiting the ability to implement new strategies. In addition, it becomes increasingly more challenging for staff to keep up with changes in legislation, including required family finding efforts and requirements related to the implementation of extended foster care beyond age 18. The juvenile court has also reduced the number of court days it will hear dependency cases each month as a way for it to reduce its expenses. This had led to long court calendars and any needed continuances are significantly delayed. These remedies to the economic challenges are necessary but severely impact child welfare staff and the level of service they can provide to families. Community partners have also been impacted by the economic climate. Services available in the community have been reduced.
- Since 2010, the Amador County Department of Social Services has experienced significant leadership changes. The Deputy Director of Programs retired June 30, 2010. This position was not filled. The Director passed away in February 2011. The Deputy Director of Fiscal and Administration became the Interim Director but then resigned in August 2011. This left the Program Manager for Child Protective Services and Adult Services in the Interim Director role until a new Director for the Department of Social Services began on January 30, 2012.
- Safe Measures continues to be utilized by Child Protective Services to monitor compliance.
- The use of Structured Decision Making (SDM) by Child Protective Services Social Workers continues. Advanced training is being sought.

This tool assists Social Workers in decision making while they assess safety and risk at critical points in time during referral investigations and case management.

- Amador County Juvenile Probation has begun to utilize the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) to manage cases in which youth are in out of home placement. Child Protective Services staff has assisted Juvenile Probation staff with this transition.
- Child Protective Services and Juvenile Probation now have access to Accurint, a web-based program provided by Lexis Nexis to assist with family finding efforts. The law now requires that social workers and probation officers identify and locate as many extended family members as possible within 30 days of a child's out of home placement.
- Child welfare services in Amador County continue to rely heavily on the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) to identify family needs, family strengths, and barriers to services. This collaboration will continue. Members currently represent Child Protective Services, Juvenile Probation, the Amador County Unified School District, Public Health, Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Services, and the Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency.
- A significant portion of the county's child abuse prevention funds (CBCAP/PSSF/CAPIT) were awarded to the Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency for various services. This has included that agency's implementation of Nurturing Parenting Programs for parenting classes and home visitor services. These programs are utilized for the treatment and prevention of child abuse and neglect. According to the California Evidence Based Clearinghouse, these programs earned a ranking of 3 (promising research evidence) and were found to be highly relevant to child welfare services.

The County has used its CWSOIP (Child Welfare Services Outcomes Improvement Project) funds to support both Child Protective Services and Juvenile Probation SIP outcome improvement strategies. CWSOIP funds are intended to support county efforts to improve safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families by providing counties with additional resources.

Amador County Child Protective Services has utilized CWSOIP funds to support substance abuse treatment for parents and children. This has included direct services (groups, individual sessions, and in-patient treatment) and drug and alcohol testing. In addition, CPS has expanded the use of these funds to include obtaining mental health treatment for family members where substance abuse issues exist. The vast majority of child welfare cases in Amador County involve substance abuse, including but not limited to alcohol, methamphetamine, marijuana, heroin, and misuse of prescription drugs. Supporting parents' efforts to obtain and to maintain sobriety and a drug free lifestyle remains critical to

reunification efforts. It is the Department's intention to continue utilizing these funds in this manner not only to promote reunification but to prevent children's reentry into foster care.

Amador County Juvenile Probation utilizes CWSOIP funds for preventive services such as counseling by Probation Officers, school visitation for minors on informal probation and all informal services related to SARB (School Attendance Review Board) interventions. Probation has also secured drug and alcohol services through the County Behavioral Health Department for minors on informal and formal probation with the use of CWSOIP funding.

Overall, Amador County has maintained compliance with its System Improvement Plan, and there are noteworthy improvements. When looking at outcome data compiled by UC Berkeley for Quarter 3 of 2011, Amador County's composite scores are above the national standard in three out of four areas (Adoption Composite, Long Term Care Composite, and Placement Stability Composite). An area of positive performance is that of placement stability. Amador County exceeded the national standard for children in placement in two categories: those in placement less than one year and those in placement for over two years. For the category of children who have been in placement for one to two years, Amador County essentially met the national standard. Another area of strength during this same reporting period is that of Family Reunification within 12 months (entry cohort), in which Amador County exceeded the national standard.

The Social Workers and Probation Officers consistently meet the requirement to maintain monthly in-person contact with every child in their caseloads. The CPS staff has been struggling with timely suspected child abuse/neglect report investigations that require an in-person response within 10 days of receipt of the suspected child abuse report. Historically, this has been an area of strength, though, and improvement in this area is anticipated in light of the fact that a vacant Social Worker position was recently filled.

In summary, Amador County's SIP focused on three areas: improving placement stability, decreasing re-entry into foster care after children are returned home, and increasing the use of relatives for out of home placement. Efforts to improve these outcomes have included increasing and improving family engagement efforts when developing case plans, increasing the use of assessment tools, expanding the use of services provided in the family home, improving the training of foster parents and relative caregivers and the support given to them, and increasing family finding efforts. An update regarding each specific strategy identified in the 2011-2014 SIP as well as the status of Amador County's outcomes in the target areas follows. Updated data, as well as milestone updates, are in blue.

## CWS/Probation Matrix

<p><b>Outcome/Systemic Factor:</b> Reentry Following Reunification</p> <p><b>C1.4 Of all children exiting foster care to reunification during the selected 12-month period, what percent reentered foster care less than 12 months from the date of discharge?</b></p>	<p>County's Current Performance:</p> <p>Amador County's Child Protective Services performance was 20% in Q2 2010. The national standard/goal is 9.9%. The state performance was 12.1%.</p>	<p>Since Amador County's PQCR report dated May 2010, Amador County's performance in this area showed improvement in 2010. According to Safe Measures, for all children whose placement episode ended in reunification during the 12-month period July 2009 through June 2010, 26.3% reentered foster care. For the timeframe of October 2009 through September 2010, 20% reentered. For the timeframe of January 2010 through December 2010, 12% reentered.</p> <p>More specifically, in 2010, three children reentered foster care from two different families. Regarding the sibling set, the court returned the children at the initial detention hearing against the recommendation of the Department. The children were subsequently re-detained following an incident of violence and the father's violation of the court's order to stay away from the mother.</p> <p>The other child who re-entered foster care did so after committing a crime. She had been a dependent of the court returned to her mother's care. She subsequently was placed by the Juvenile Probation Department.</p>	<p><b>Improvement Goal 1.0</b></p> <p>The goal is to meet the national standard of 9.9% which is a 10.1% decrease. At least 90.1% of children who exit foster care to reunification during the year will not reenter foster care within 12 months from the date of discharge.</p>	<table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Strategy Rationale</th><th>CAPIT</th><th>CBCAP</th><th>PSSF</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Implementation of family engagement strategies has proven to be a promising practice in child welfare. This includes</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr></tbody></table>	Strategy Rationale	CAPIT	CBCAP	PSSF	Implementation of family engagement strategies has proven to be a promising practice in child welfare. This includes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategy Rationale	CAPIT	CBCAP	PSSF									
Implementation of family engagement strategies has proven to be a promising practice in child welfare. This includes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>									
<p><b>Strategy 1.1</b></p> <p>Increase family engagement efforts</p>												

Milestone	Time Frame	Assignment to	CPS Social Workers, CPS Program Manager, Northern CA Training Academy
<p><b>1.1.1 CPS Social Workers will participate in training and coaching to enhance Motivational Interviewing Skills.</b></p> <p>All Social Workers and the CPS Program Manager have participated in Motivational Interviewing training. In addition, the staff has participated in multiple follow-up webinars. One-on-one coaching has not been implemented.</p>	<p>The CPS Social Workers and Program Manager completed a 2-day Motivational Interviewing training in November 2010 as a result of the County's Peer Quality Case Review. Each staff member will complete three one-hour webinars in January, February and March, 2011. This will be followed up with on-going coaching for the Social Workers.</p> <p><i>Completed other than one on one coaching.</i></p>	Assigned to	CPS Social Workers, oversight provided by Program Manager
<p><b>1.1.2 CPS Social Workers will hold reunification transition meetings with parents and children, when appropriate, at least one month prior to the child's return home to identify needs and strengths and to develop family maintenance case plans.</b></p>	<p>Beginning June 2011 and ongoing <i>Completed and on-going.</i></p>	Assigned to	

<p>The Social Workers have been holding reunification transition meetings with parents and children, when appropriate, prior to the child(ren)'s return to the home. Sometimes, service providers are included in these discussions as well. During the meeting, the participants discuss needs and strengths and develop family maintenance case plans together. The risk of reentry is discussed with the parents along with an explanation of the purpose of the case plan to reduce that risk.</p>	<p>CPS Social Workers, oversight provided by Program Manager</p>						
<p>1.1.3 CPS Social Workers will document reunification transition meetings in CWS/CMS case contacts, indicating that this is a family engagement effort, and in court reports indicating how the case plan was developed.</p> <p><i>For every status review hearing, the Social Workers are now documenting in their court reports how the case plans are developed, including the level of involvement by the family members.</i></p>	<p>Beginning June 2011 and ongoing <i>In progress.</i></p>						
<p><i>Documentation of Family Engagement Efforts (FEE) in CWS/CMS (meaning the Social Workers properly code their contacts as "FEE") requires improvement. Safe Measures shows an increase, though, from 0% in October 2011 to 15.5% in January 2011.</i></p>	<p><b>Strategy Rationale</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1246 1159 1345 1915"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><b>CAPIT</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><b>CBCAP</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><b>PSSF</b></td> </tr> </table> <p>Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools are designed to improve assessments of family situations to better ascertain</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>CAPIT</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>CBCAP</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>PSSF</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>CAPIT</b>						
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>CBCAP</b>						
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>PSSF</b>						

Milestones	Time Frames	Assigned To
days prior to recommending reunification of a family to the court. Compliance rate will be at least 90%.	X N/A  the protection needs of children, to increase consistency and accuracy in case assessments and to increase efficiency and best use of resources. Goals include reducing the rate of subsequent abuse/neglect referrals and substantiations, reducing the severity of subsequent abuse/neglect allegations, reducing the rate of foster care placement and reducing the length of stay for children in foster care. Amador County CPS began using SDM in July, 2010.	CPS Social Workers
1.2.1 Social Workers will complete the Reunification Reassessment tool no more than 65 days prior to recommending reunification of the family.	By the end of the third year, compliance will be 90%.  <i>In progress.</i>  <i>The timely completion of the risk reassessment tool increased from May 2011 to December 2011. In May, 25% of the tools were completed timely. In December, 46% were completed timely. The Program Manager is currently working with the Northern Training Academy to arrange for advance training which will include three-hour modules addressing each of the tools.</i>	CPS Social Workers
1.2.2 Social Workers will monitor compliance with the use of Safe Measures at least once each week.	On-going  <i>In progress.</i>  <i>Usage of Safe Measures by the social workers has fluctuated during this report period. This is an area requiring more improvement.</i>	CPS Social Workers
1.2.3 Program Manager will monitor compliance with the use of Safe Measures at least once each week.	On-going  <i>Completed and on-going.</i>	CPS Program Manager

Milestone	Strategy 1.3 Identify, assess and expand the use of home visitor services.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	It appears that some factors contributing to reentry into foster care include the parent's lack of knowledge, confidence and abilities to appropriately interact and support his/her child(ren) through the many frustrations that are typical of parenting. Some research finds that providing in-home intensive services can prevent children from reentering foster care. This can allow the parent to practice new parenting techniques in the home. Often, this is a better learning environment for those who do not learn well in a traditional classroom setting.	Assigned to	Time Frames
	<p>1.3.1 Survey community agencies to assess availability of home visitor programs.</p> <p>The survey was completed with the collaboration of multiple community partners.</p>		<p>In September 2010, First 5 Amador conducted a survey of county home visitor programs in place.</p> <p>Completed.</p>		
			<p>Complete by April 30, 2011</p> <p>Completed.</p>		

<p>agencies can support one another and avoid duplication of services so as to better utilize funding sources. First 5 Amador will be responsible for updating the guide. Since beginning to utilize the resource guide, there appears to be some increase in the use of the home visitor services provided by the Public Health Department and Head Start.</p>	<p>1.3.3 Distribute resource guide to CPS Social Workers and review. Evaluate current level of use of each of the available home visitor programs and any barriers to accessing these services.</p>	<p>CPS staff received the resource guide in April 2011. Some services were being underutilized, such as those provided by the Public Health Department and Head Start. Staff and family members refer to the guide to determine if a home visiting program is appropriate and should be considered for the case plan.</p>	<p>1.3.4 Develop referral processes, including referral forms, when necessary, for CPS Social Workers to utilize in order to expand use of home visitor services.</p>	<p>Referral processes were evaluated and modified as needed. Referral forms are included in the guide.</p>	<p>1.3.5 Incorporate home visitor services into Family Maintenance case plans where appropriate.</p>

*The Social Workers are expanding the use of home visitor programs in their case plans.*

**Outcome/Systemic Factor:** Placement Stability (8 days to 12 months in care)

**C4.1 Of all children in foster care during the selected 12-month period who were in care for at least eight days but less than 12 months, what percent had two or fewer placements?**

**County's Current Performance:**

Amador County Child Protective Services' performance was 78.1% for Q2 2010. The national standard/goal is 86%. The state performance was 83.3%.

*Since Amador County's PQCR report dated May 2010, Amador County's performance in this area has improved.*

According to Safe Measures data, of all children served in foster care during the 12-month period of July 2009 through June 2010 who were in foster care for at least eight days but less than 12 months, 79.4% had two or fewer placements. For January 2010 through December 2010, 96.3% had two or fewer placements. For January 2011 through December 2011, 86.7% had two or fewer placements.

*Looking at UC Berkeley's data, for Q 3 2011, 90.6% of the children in placement had two or fewer placements.*

**Improvement Goal 2.0**

The goal is to meet the federal standard of 86%, a 7.9% increase.

**Strategy 2.1**

Recruit, train, support foster parents, relative caregivers and non-related extended family members (NREFM) to minimize placement disruptions and to maintain children in their own community.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>CAPIT</b>	Children experience trauma by disrupted placements and multiple placement changes. Behavior problems, especially aggressive behaviors, are a strong predictor of placement disruption. Trained and supported foster parents, relative caregivers, and NREFM caregivers have more reasonable expectations and more skills when handling and understanding the behavior problems of the children in their care. When children are placed in their own community, the trauma of placement, which can lead to behavior problems, is decreased for a variety of reasons. For instance, they can remain in their school of origin, and the close proximity to their parents supports reunification efforts.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>CBCAP</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>PSSF</b>	
<b>X</b>	<b>N/A</b>	

Milestone	Time Frame	Assigned To
<p>2.1.1 Recruit, train and certify four foster family agency homes within Amador County through target advertising and other outreach efforts.</p> <p><i>The foster family agencies in Amador County have certified six foster family homes located within Amador County since March 2011. The efforts to certify Amador County homes will continue.</i></p>	<p>Recruitment to begin April 1, 2011, and completed by April 1, 2013.</p> <p><i>Completed and on-going.</i></p>	<p>Foster family agency staff</p>
<p>2.1.2 Develop community resource guide or access existing resource guide for foster parents and relative/NREFM caregivers to be given to caregivers at time of placement and/or certification.</p> <p><i>An existing resource guide was located and is now being utilized by the foster family agencies and the CPS Social Workers and Juvenile Probation Officers at the time of placement.</i></p>	<p>Completed by September 1, 2011.</p> <p><i>Completed.</i></p>	<p>Foster family agency staff, Foster-Kinship Care Education (FKCE) Program, CPS Program Manager, Juvenile Probation Supervisor, community partners</p>
	<p>First assessment completed by December 31, 2011, followed up with annual assessments.</p> <p><i>Completed and on-going.</i></p>	<p>FKCE staff, CPS Program Manager, Juvenile Probation Supervisor, CPS Social Workers, Juvenile Probation Officers, Foster Family Agency staff, foster parents and relative/NREFM caregivers</p>

To lead into this process, the CPS Program Manager provided the foster family agencies and the FKCE staff with the literature review compiled by the Northern Training Academy titled: "Placement Stability in Child Welfare Services: Issues, Concerns, Outcomes, and Future Direction" for their review. Meetings were subsequently held in April, May, and June 2011 to assess and to discuss the FKCE program and the continuing education opportunities provided by the foster family agencies in Amador County. Meetings included the CPS Program Manager, the Juvenile Probation Supervisor, Foster Family Agency Social Workers, foster parents, relative/NREFM caregivers, and FKCE staff. The first meeting included an overview of Amador County's SIP and its focus on placement stability. Many caregivers, both relatives/NREFMs and foster parents, were invited to participate and were also given an overview of the SIP and an explanation about how their involvement in this process would be pivotal to improving Amador County's outcomes in this area.

Results of the meetings included: mandatory orientation for relative/NREFM caregivers now being provided by the FKCE program which developed the curriculum, implementation of an annual focus group of caregivers to assess training needs, implementation of bi-monthly support groups for caregivers, development of a list of trainings to cover over the course of the year, consideration of website for resources for

Milestone	Time Frames	Assigned To	
local foster parents, improved communication between FKCE and foster family agencies.	Completed by June 30, 2012  Completed and on-going.	FKCE staff, CPS Program Manager, Juvenile Probation Supervisor, Foster Family Agency staff, foster parents and relative/NREFM caregivers	
2.1.4 Modify course offerings according to assessment.  <i>Course offerings were modified based on the outcome of the focus group meetings listed above. This includes more advanced training addressing how to handle challenging child behaviors and emotional needs. For instance, a training was offered on November 30, 2011 titled "Dealing with Difficult Behaviors: The Effects of Early Trauma and Attachment Disruptions." The trainer was Teri Gelgood, LMFT who has close to 20 years of related experience. Focus groups will occur annually to develop the curriculum for the next year.</i>			

<p><b>2.2.2</b> Develop family finding protocol for CPS and Juvenile Probation staff to utilize at the front end of cases. Consider utilizing support staff to assist with searches.</p> <p><i>Procedures have been developed and distributed to front line staff. Procedures include methods to obtain information about extended family members and what steps must be completed once family members have been identified and located. Methods include utilization of a questionnaire given to parents and other identified relatives as well as the utilization of the Lexis Nexis' search program called Accurint. Support staff has not yet been trained to assist with family finding efforts.</i></p>	<p>Complete by December 31, 2011. <i>Completed.</i></p>	<p>CPS Program Manager, Social Services Case Aide, Juvenile Probation Supervisor, Juvenile Probation Support Staff</p>
<p><b>2.2.3</b> Provide training for CPS and Juvenile Probation staff to implement family finding protocol.</p> <p><i>Child welfare staff has been trained on the family finding procedures, and the procedures have been implemented.</i></p>	<p>Complete by February 29, 2012. <i>Completed.</i></p>	<p>CPS Program Manager, Juvenile Probation Supervisor</p>
<p><b>2.2.4</b> Social Workers and Probation Officers will document family finding efforts and results in case records (including in CWS/CMS for CPS staff) and in court reports.</p> <p><i>Family finding efforts are consistently being documented in Dispositional Hearing court reports. Documentation in CWS/CMS requires improvement.</i></p>	<p>On-going <i>In progress.</i></p>	<p>CPS Social Workers and Juvenile Probation Officers, oversight provided by supervisory staff</p>

Strategy 2.3 Utilize Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings to identify possible placement disruptions and to access support and services to maintain placements.	<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	Strategy Rationale  Increasing multi-agency support and collaborative efforts among community partners enhances the services provided to children and their families. The MDT that currently exists in Amador County has been highly effective in identifying barriers to services and removing those barriers. The MDT can become instrumental in providing early intervention and support to relative and non-relative caregivers in order to promote stability of placements.	Multi-Disciplinary Team members		Multi-Disciplinary Team members	
2.3.1 Consider expanding Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) membership to include a foster parent representative and/or a foster family agency representative.  <i>In April 2011, the Multi-Disciplinary Team decided not to expand membership to include a foster parent or foster family agency representative.</i>		Complete by June 30, 2011.  <i>Completed.</i>				Multi-Disciplinary Team members
<b>2.3.2</b> Consider expanding MDT membership to include additional service agencies.  <i>In April 2011, this possibility was discussed by the Multi-Disciplinary Team members. It was decided to not add any new members at this time. The issue will be revisited in the future. That being said, other service providers are invited on a case by case basis.</i>		Complete by June 30, 2011. A staff person from the Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency was added to the team in September, 2010, as a result of feedback received during the PQCR process.  <i>Completed.</i>				Multi-Disciplinary Team members
<b>2.3.3</b> Invite foster parents, relative caretakers, NREFMs and foster family agency social workers to attend MDT meetings on a case by case basis when placement disruption appears possible.		Beginning April 1, 2011, and on-going.  <i>Completed and on-going.</i>				Multi-Disciplinary Team members

Milestone

Assigned to

Multi-Disciplinary Team members

*In April 2011, it was decided to invite caregivers and foster family agency social workers to join the MDT discussions regarding the specific children placed in their homes.. This has been occurring as deemed appropriate by the team, particularly when there appears to be a risk of placement disruption. This allows the caregiver to directly express to the team and service providers how the child is doing and what he/she identifies as the foster family's needs to maintain the placement. Additional supports and services are identified and implemented. Follow-up meetings are frequently held to assure the caregivers that this support remains available to them and to assess the effectiveness of what has been put into place.*

**Outcome/Systemic Factor: Least Restrictive Placement (Point in Time: Relative)**

**4B What is the distribution of open placement types on the first day of each quarter?**

**County's Current Performance:**

In Q4 2010, Amador County Child Protective Services had 20.6% of children in out of home placement placed with a relative. This is down from Q4 2009, at which point 32.3% of placed children were placed with relatives. The state performance for Q2 2010 was 32.6%. In January, 2011, Amador County Juvenile Probation had four children in out of home placement. None of these children were placed with relatives.

*In Q1 2011, 15.2% of children in out of home placement were placed with a relative. In Q2 2011, the percent of children was 13.9%. In Q3 2011, the percent of children was 18.8%. In Q4 2011, the percent of children was 25%. For Q1 2012, the percent so far is 28.6%. While the goal has not yet been met, it appears that the trend is moving in a positive direction.*

**Improvement Goal 3.0**

The goal for Child Protective Services is to increase relative placements to 35%. The goal for Juvenile Probation is to increase relative placements by 25%.

**Strategy 3.1**

Implement Family Finding and other "diligent search" activities.

<input type="checkbox"/>	CAPIT
<input type="checkbox"/>	CBCAP
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PSSF
<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A

**Strategy Rationale**  
Children reach permanency sooner when family finding efforts are made to locate family and other significant people in the children's lives at the onset of removal for purposes of placement and support. The process of finding lifelong connections needs to be a continuous process throughout the involvement of child welfare services.

Milestone	Description	Assigned to
Time Frame		
<p><b>3.1.1 Explore family finding strategies being utilized by other counties.</b></p> <p>The Juvenile Probation Supervisor had conversations with staff from three different surrounding counties to gather information about how they are improving family finding strategies. Methods include utilization of a questionnaire given to parents and other identified relatives as well as the utilization of the Lexis Nexis' search program called Accurint.</p>	<p>Complete by June 30, 2011. Completed.</p>	<p>CPS Program Manager, Juvenile Probation Supervisor</p>
<p><b>3.1.2 Develop family finding protocol for CPS and Juvenile Probation staff to utilize at the front end of cases. Consider utilizing support staff to assist with searches.</b></p>	<p>Complete by December 31, 2011. Completed.</p>	<p>CPS Program Manager, Social Services Case Aide, Juvenile Probation Supervisor, Probation support staff</p>
<p><b>3.1.3 Provide training for CPS and Juvenile Probation staff to implement family finding protocol.</b></p>	<p>Complete by February 29, 2012. Completed.</p>	<p>CPS Program Manager, Juvenile Probation Supervisor</p>
<p><b>3.1.4 Social Workers and Probation Officers will document family finding efforts in case records</b></p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>CPS Social Workers and Juvenile Probation Officers, oversight</p>

(including in CWS/CMS for CPS staff) and in court reports.	<i>In progress.</i>		
<i>Family finding efforts are consistently being documented in Dispositional Hearing court reports. Documentation in CWS/CMS requires improvement.</i>			
<b>Strategy 3.2</b> Train and support relative caregivers to minimize placement disruptions.	<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>Children experience trauma by disrupted placements and multiple placement changes. Behavior problems, especially aggressive behaviors, are a strong predictor of placement disruption. Trained and supported foster parents, relative caregivers and NREFM caregivers have more reasonable expectations and more skills when handling and understanding the behavior problems of the children in their care. When children are placed in their own community, the trauma of placement, which can lead to behavior problems, is decreased for a variety of reasons including that they can remain in their school of origin and have close proximity to their parents' supports and reunification efforts.</p>	
<b>3.2.1</b> Develop community resource guide or access existing resource guide for relative caregivers to be given to caregivers at time of placement.  <i>An existing resource guide was located and is now being utilized by the foster family agencies and the CPS Social Workers and Juvenile Probation Officers at the time of placement.</i>		Complete by September 1, 2011. <i>Completed.</i>	Foster family agency staff, CPS Program Manager, Juvenile Probation Supervisor, Foster-Kinship Care Education (FKCE) staff, community partners
<b>3.2.2</b> Assess current Foster-Kinship Care Education (FKCE) course offerings, possibly		First assessment completed by December 31, 2011, followed up	FKCE staff, CPS Program Manager, Juvenile Probation

<p>with use of a survey to foster parents and relative caregivers to identify supportive course topics. Explore availability of web-based trainings. Take into consideration that relatives caring for Juvenile Probation youth may have needs different from those providing care for CPS children.</p>	<p>with annual reassessments.</p>	<p>Supervisor, CPS Social Worker, Juvenile Probation Officers, Foster Family Agency staff, foster parents and relative/NREFM caregivers</p> <p><i>To lead into this process, the CPS Program Manager provided the foster family agencies and the FKCE staff with the literature review compiled by the Northern Training Academy titled: "Placement Stability in Child Welfare Services: Issues, Concerns, Outcomes, and Future Direction" for their review. Meetings were subsequently held in April, May, and June 2011 to assess and to discuss the FKCE program and the continuing education opportunities provided by the foster family agencies in Amador County. Meetings included the CPS Program Manager, the Juvenile Probation Supervisor, Foster Family Agency Social Workers, foster parents, relative/NREFM caregivers, and FKCE staff. The first meeting included an overview of Amador County's SIP and its focus on placement stability. Many caregivers, both relatives/NREFMs and foster parents, were invited to participate and were also given an overview of the SIP and an explanation about how their involvement in this process would be pivotal to improving Amador County's outcomes in this area.</i></p> <p><i>Results of the meetings included: mandatory</i></p>
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<p><i>orientation for relative/NREFM caregivers now being provided by the FKCE program which developed the curriculum, implementation of an annual focus group of caregivers to assess training needs, implementation of bi-monthly support groups for caregivers, development of a list of trainings to cover over the course of the year, consideration of website for resources for local foster parents, improved communication between FKCE and foster family agencies.</i></p>	<p>FKCE staff, CPS Program Manager, Juvenile Probation Supervisor, Foster Family Agency staff, foster parents and relative/NREFM caregivers</p>
<p><b>3.2.3 Modify course offerings according to assessment.</b></p> <p><i>Course offerings were modified based on the outcome of the focus group meetings listed above. This includes more advanced training addressing how to handle challenging child behaviors and emotional needs. For instance, a training was offered on November 30, 2011 titled "Dealing with Difficult Behaviors: The Effects of Early Trauma and Attachment Disruptions." The trainer was Teri Gelgood, LMFT who has close to 20 years of related experience. Focus groups will occur annually to develop the curriculum for the next year.</i></p>	<p>Completed by June 30, 2012, and annually thereafter.</p> <p><i>Completed.</i></p>
<p><b>3.2.4 Provide training for CPS and Probation staff regarding process of approving relative homes for placement.</b></p> <p><i>CPS and Probation staff participated in relative placement training on November 15, 2011 provided by the Northern Training Academy. In addition, CPS staff has assisted Probation staff</i></p>	<p>Completed by December 31, 2011.</p> <p><i>Completed.</i></p> <p>CPS Program Manager, Juvenile Probation Supervisor, Northern Training Academy</p>

<p>with the utilization of CWS/CMS for placement purposes and the procedures for approving a relative for placement.</p>
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#### Data Source Cite for CWS Outcomes System Summary Reports

Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Glasser, T., Williams, D., Simmerman, K., Simon, V., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Frerer, K., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Winn, A., Lou, C., & Peng, C. (2009). *Child Welfare Service Reports for California* for Amador County. Retrieved from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website.  
URL: [http://csr.berkeley.edu/ucb\\_childwelfare](http://csr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare)

#### Data Source Cite for SafeMeasures

Children's Research Center Safe Measures Data, Amador County CWS/CMS Reports from Children's Research Center website.  
URL: [www.safemeasures.org/ca](http://www.safemeasures.org/ca)